

A Parent Handbook for a Modern Child Development Center

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Purpose for Thesis

As more and more parents are working outside the home, there is becoming an increasing need in today's society for quality day care. Centers are appearing everywhere. Companies and large corporations are opening them for their employees. Churches, YMCA's, colleges, and universities across the nation are opening centers as they recognize the need. A day care facility has opened in a large shopping mall in Fort Wayne, IN. The need is being filled, but how well?

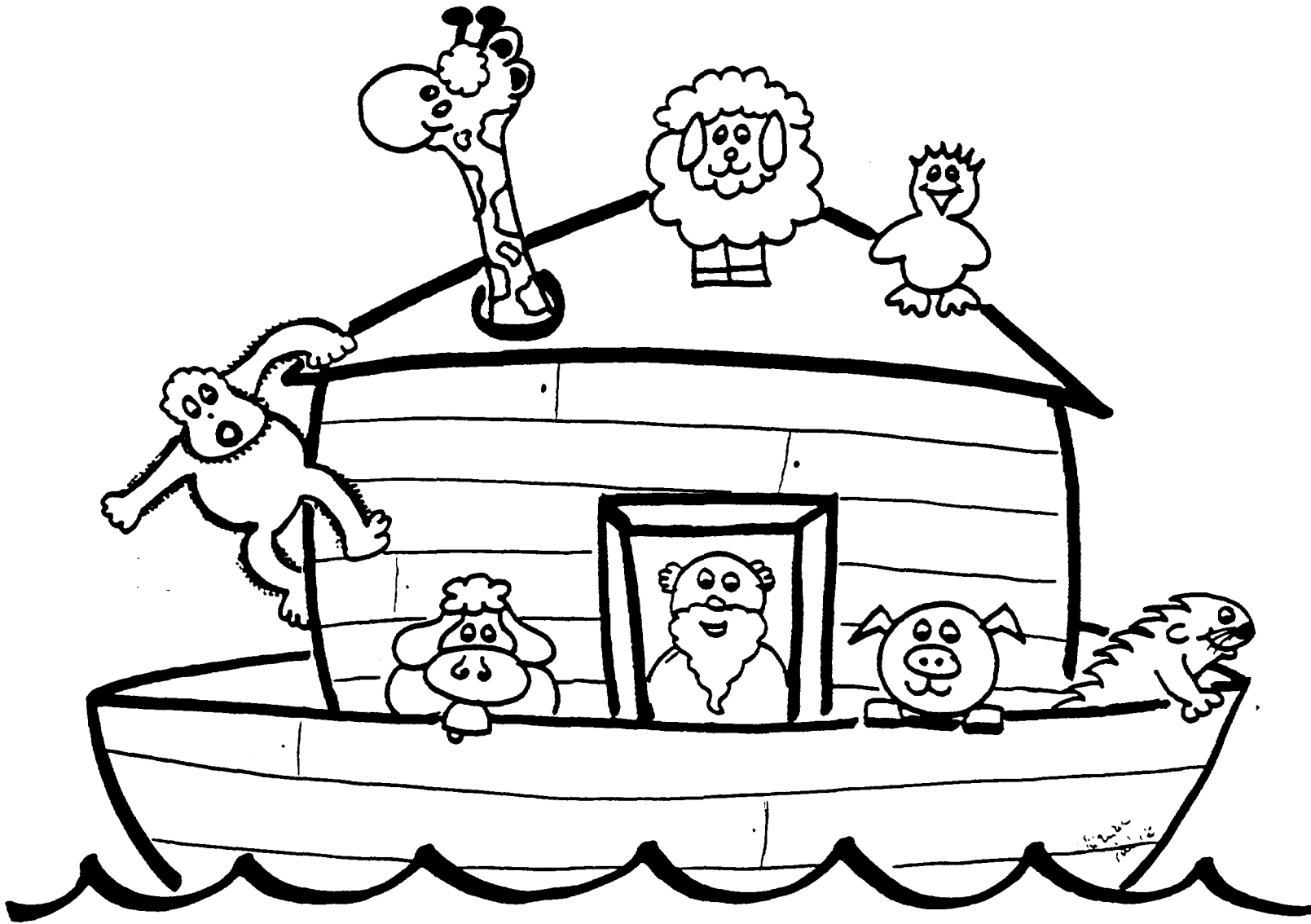
Some of the centers that are being opened today have excellent programs. They provide loving care, stimulating developmental activities, and follow strict guidelines that have been set forth by the state, as well as applying developmentally appropriate practices. Other centers that are opening are mediocre at best, and provide little more for the child than shelter for the day.

For my thesis / creative project, I have devised a parent handbook for a fictional child development center that is the epitome of all child care facilities. I have based all of the center's policies and procedures on state guidelines and suggestions made by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. I have included the center's philosophy and goals, information about the center, a listing and explanation of important policies, health practices, as well as forms that would be filled out by the parent. Everything in this parent handbook exists as it would if Noah's Ark Nursery were an operating child development center.

References

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A Child Development Center



I have placed my rainbow in the clouds as a sign of my promise. (Genesis 9:13)

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Noah's Ark Nursery A Child Development Center



Program Philosophy

At Noah's Ark Nursery, we believe that each and every child is an individual, each with his or her own special personality. Every child in our center has had a unique set of experiences that have led to the development of that personality, and one of our goals is to guide your child in further development. At our center, we strive to help children to grow and develop as a whole child; physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

Because we understand that no two children are alike, we realize that no two children will learn in the same manner. We work hard to personalize all experiences for your child. While we realize that each child is an individual, we also know that young children as a whole learn best through exploration, manipulation, active involvement in first-hand experiences, and through constructive play.

At our center, your child will be treated as a unique and valuable person. We will encourage your child to build self confidence and character, and to realize his or her personal worth while developing a positive self image.

We strongly believe that a child will learn best in a comfortable and home like atmosphere, and at Noah's Ark we strive to provide just that type of an environment . As you walk through our doors, you will not find straight rows of desks or children completing worksheets. What you will find is a happy group of children learning to live and learn and grow with one another in an environment humming with activity and filled with Christian love.

We are looking forward to becoming a special part of your child's life.

Noah's Ark Nursery A Child Development Center

Our Goals for Your Children

....To develop a positive self image and high self esteem.

....To participate in positive experiences with other children and learn to work and play harmoniously with others.

....To develop the freedom for creative expression.

....To be guided in the exploration of their environments while satisfying their curiosity.

....To learn positive ways and acceptable outlets for dealing with emotions.

....To be given many opportunities to grow and develop physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

....To develop the skills necessary for verbal and nonverbal communication.

....To develop a sense of trust.

General Information

About our Center

Noah's Ark Nursery is a state licensed child development center that provides quality care and learning experiences for children ages 3, 4, and 5. We have a very qualified staff, all of whom are extremely excited about working with you and your child.

Schedule

The center will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Program hours are from 9:00 until 4:00. Please see to it that your child is here by that time in the morning so he doesn't miss out on any exciting activities. The maximum number of hours a child may remain in the center is 9 1/2. A late fee of \$3.00 will be assessed for every 15 minutes, or portion thereof, a parent is late in picking up a child. We understand that problems do arise and that a parent may be late in picking up a child; however, this must be a very rare occurrence.

Noah's Ark Nursery is open year round. We will be closed the following days:

New Years Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day

Fees

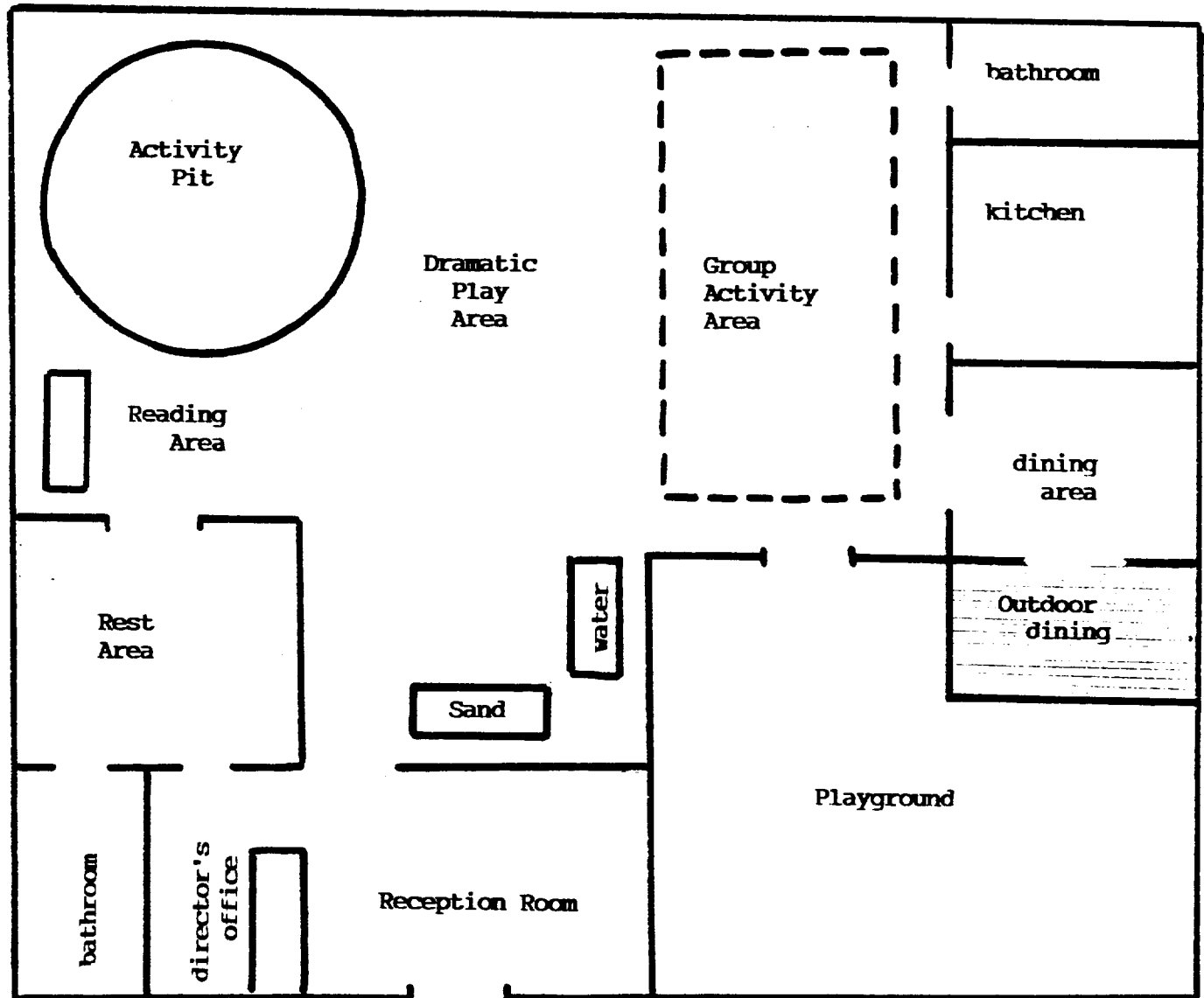
Tuition must be paid in advance on Friday for the coming week. For our convenience, we ask that you pay by check. Please make checks payable to Noah's Ark Nursery.

Fees are \$55.00 per week per child. These fees include lunch, 2 healthy snacks, a Noah's Ark T-shirt, craft supplies, and field trips. If your child will be joining us for breakfast, an extra \$3.00 per week will be charged.

A few scholarships are available for those unable to afford full tuition. Please see the center director for more information.

Noah's Ark Nursery

A Child Development Center



General Policies

Abuse

According to the Indiana State Department of Public Welfare, any suspected or known incidents or evidence of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the county department of public welfare, child protective services unit. Because we care very much about the health and safety of the children at Noah's Ark, any teacher who suspects that a child in her class is being abused will report her suspicion to the center director who will then contact child protective services.

Arrival and Departure

All children must be accompanied inside the center by an adult and released directly to their teachers. Noah's Ark cannot be responsible for a child that we do not know has arrived. Please do not bring your child to the center prior to 7:00 a.m. as there will be no staff on duty to supervise.

Children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. Children will be released only to those people who are listed on the child's Pick Up Authorization Card in his or her file. This is done only to ensure the safety of your child.

Attendance

To get the most out of our program, it is necessary that children be regular in attendance. If it is necessary that your child miss a day at the center, please notify us. We feel responsible for knowing the "whereabouts" of all of our children. If your child is absent from the center due to an illness, please notify the center as to the nature of the problem, especially in the case of a communicable disease such as chicken pox or measles.

Birthdays and Holidays

The center celebrates Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Independence Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For each of these holidays, we will plan a special celebration that will include both you and your child. Prior to each special event, a notice will be sent to all parents containing all pertinent information.

We realize that each child has his or her own special day, too. We encourage your child to celebrate his or her birthday at the center. We simply ask that you notify us a few days ahead of time so that we can make your child's day a special one.

Clothing

Your child will be spending a large portion of his or her day at the center, and we want to make sure that he or she is comfortable. Please dress your child in appropriate clothing that will allow the freedom to explore, experiment, and play throughout the day.

We do ask that on our special trip days, you make sure that your child wears his or her Noah's Ark T-shirt. When our children "match", we are easier to identify as a group.

Discipline

The staff at Noah's Ark believes that every child is a blessing. Our discipline policies include only positive guidance techniques, including teacher modeling of expected behaviors, encouraging expected behaviors, praise, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, and setting clear limits. In *extreme* cases, a very brief (3-5 minutes) supervised separation will take place.

Our center *never* uses corporal or other cruel or harsh punishments. We would never frighten or humiliate a child to control his or her actions, and no child will ever be shaken, hit, or spanked. Any staff member violating our discipline policy will be immediately terminated.

Naps

Our days at the center can get long, and it is for this reason that we allow the children two rest periods during the day, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Your child should bring some type of nap mat that will be kept in his cubby hole here at the center. Many children choose to bring sleeping bags. Naps are never forced, nor are children scolded for being tired.

Nutrition

The children at Noah's Ark Nursery live very busy lives. Our active schedule makes it essential that we eat energy packed meals to get us through the day. Included in your weekly tuition is a hot, well-balanced lunch for your child each day, as well as two nutritional snacks. Breakfast is available for those children who arrive prior to 8:30 a.m. for an extra \$3.00 per week.

If your child has any special nutritional needs, please contact the center director, and she will work with our kitchen staff to provide a healthy lunch for your child.

Parent Conferences

We think that it's very important that you know exactly what's going on in the life of your child. For this reason, we have regularly scheduled conferences three times a year for all parents so that you can have the opportunity to talk with your child's teacher. If at any time between conferences you would like to meet with your child's teacher, the center would be happy to make an immediate appointment. Child care will be available during all conferences.

Parental Involvement

We realize that parents are very busy people, but we also know that you are the most important people in the lives of your children. It is for this reason that we strongly encourage you to become actively involved in your child's life at the center. We offer many opportunities for your involvement, from volunteering to read stories in your child's class to helping with special celebrations. If you are interested in becoming involved at Noah's Ark, please talk to the center director.

Special Needs

We see every child in our center as special and unique, but occasionally we notice a child in our center that appears to have a special need. It is normal for children to develop at different rates, but when a child exhibits a severe development delay, he or she may have a special need. Fortunately, most developmental delays and handicapping conditions can be helped or completely corrected if the problem is detected early. A list of early warning signs is included that will help you determine if a problem might develop.

Any decisions made concerning your child at our center will be based primarily on observations rather than on any type of test score. No decision will be made without parental input.

Early Warning Signs for Potential Problems

Seeing

If the child...

- * doesn't look at toys or people and try to reach for them.
- * frequently rubs his or her eyes.
- * has red, watering or encrusted eyes.
- * sometimes or always crosses one or both eyes.
- * doesn't notice distant objects.

-continued on next page-

Hearing

If the child...

- * doesn't startle at loud noises.
- * doesn't turn to face sounds and noises by six months.
- * has frequent earaches, running ears, or running nose.
- * doesn't understand spoken conversation or directions.
- * talks in an unusually low voice.

Talking

If the child...

- * doesn't babble and coo as an infant.
- * can't say names of a few people and toys by age 2.
- * can't tell you about two things that have happened to him or her by age 3.
- * can't talk in short sentences by age 4.

Moving

If the child...

- * is unable to sit by age 1.
- * is unable to walk by age 2.
- * is unable to kick and throw by age 3.
- * is unable to run by age 4.
- * is unable to hop on one foot by age 5.

Thinking

If the child...

- * doesn't respond to his or her name by age 1.
- * doesn't point to eyes, ears, nose, and mouth by age 2.
- * doesn't know big and little by age 3.
- * does not count to five by age 5.

If you think your child may have a special need, seek help now!

This material taken from Resources for Every Day in Every Way

by Cynthia Holley and Faraday Burditt.

Staff

All of our center staff are qualified to work with 3, 4, and 5 year olds through college level training in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, as well as having had a supervised period of experience with children of this age.

All staff members, including the director, must undergo at least 12 hours of formal in-service each year.

Toys From Home

A variety of stimulating toys are provided by the center for your child's enjoyment. The toys at the center belong to all of the children, and they provide an excellent opportunity for the children to practice sharing and getting along. For this reason, we feel that it is unnecessary for your child to bring toys from home.

Visitors

Visitors are always welcome at Noah's Ark Nursery. We are very proud of our program, as well as our facilities, and we love to "show off" to the parents, friends, and relatives of the children that we serve. All we ask is that you stop by the director's office and notify her of your presence in the building. Drop by anytime!

Special Parent Meetings

On the third Monday of every month, Noah's Ark Nursery has a meeting especially for the parents of the children that we serve. These meetings are informational and deal with topics that are pertinent to you, the parent. They are also very social as they give you the opportunity to meet your child's teachers and the parents of your child's friends. During these meetings, you are given the opportunity to listen, to speak, and to learn. These educational sessions are free for parents, but we ask that you register at the center at least one week in advance so we have an idea of how many parents to expect. Child care will be provided during these evening meetings. A listing of this years meeting topics follows.

September	"Is My Child Normal?" This session will give a brief overview of normal stages of development.
October	"Not ANOTHER Tantrum!" How to handle minor, as well as major, discipline problems effectively.
November	"She's Such a Fussy Eater." This session deals with childhood nutrition.
December	"There's Nothing To Do!" Here are some rainy day activities you can do at home.
January	"Once Upon A Time..." We will be discussing the benefits of reading to your child.
February	"When the Kids are Fighting..." How to handle sibling rivalry.
March	"He's <i>Covered</i> with Spots!" What to do about childhood diseases.
April	"AAAAAAAAAAAAAH!" How to handle stress.
May	"Mommy, I'm scared." Discover ways to deal with your child's fears.
June	"We Never Talk..." How to enhance and improve your family's communication.
July	"I Can't Do It." How to build self-esteem in your child.
August	"Turn That T.V. Off!" There ARE some positive uses for T.V.

Curriculum and Classes

How we teach...

Children are naturally curious, active, and full of energy. This is why you'll never see a child at our center doing any type of seatwork. We believe that young children learn best through meaningful hands-on activities and experiences. We provide active opportunities for fine and gross motor development, as well as real life situations to develop social skills, such as helping and cooperation. By providing meaningful experiences and opportunities to use language, we help children to develop literacy. At Noah's Ark Nursery, all concepts are developed through observation, interaction, and exploration.

Daily Schedule

7:00	Staggered Arrival Outdoor or Indoor Play Breakfast
9:00	Opening Circle Time
9:30	Dramatic Play Centers
10:00	Fine Motor Activities
10:20	Snack and Clean-up
10:40	Rest
11:10	Unstructured Playtime
11:30	Music and Movement
12:00	Lunch
12:20	Crafts
12:40	Story-time
1:00	Unstructured Playtime
1:20	Rhymes, Fingerplays, and Songs
1:40	Games and Gross Motor Activities
2:00	Afternoon Snack and Clean-up
2:20	Story-time
2:40	Closing Circle Time
3:00	Rest
4:00-	Staggered Dismissal
6:00	Learning Centers Unstructured Play Educational Television (Sesame Street)

Themes

Noah's Ark Nursery serves children ages 3, 4, and 5. Our approach to learning is thematic. Every week, the classes focus on a different theme. While the theme is the same for each class, the activities will be different and appropriate for the intended age level.

September

week 1: Off to School
week 2: Who am I?
week 3: Body Parts
week 4: Senses

October

week 1: Autumn
week 2: Community Workers
week 3: My Neighborhood
week 4: Boo! It's Halloween

November

week 1: Shapes
week 2: Pets
week 3: My Family
week 4: Giving Thanks

December

week 1: Winter Weather
week 2: Around the World
week 3: Feelings
week 4: Christmas

January

week 1: Let it Snow!
week 2: Colors
week 3: Fairy Tales
week 4: Munching (food)

February

week 1: Transportation
week 2: Valentine's Day
week 3: Outer Space and Future
week 4: Letters

March

week 1: Bubbles and Balloons
week 2: Green Week
week 3: Healthy Me
week 4: Safe and Sound

April

week 1: Spring has Sprung
week 2: Rabbits
week 3: Carnival Fun
week 4: Dinosaurs

May

week 1: Under the Sea
week 2: Toys
week 3: Join the Band
week 4: Flowers

June

week 1: Summer Fun
week 2: Camp Out
week 3: To the Zoo
week 4: Jungle Fever

July

week 1: Independence Day
week 2: Communication
week 3: The Circus
week 4: Farm

August

week 1: Animals
week 2: Feathered Friends
week 3: To the Beach!
week 4: Games

The Preschool Child

Adapted slightly from Resources for Every Day in Every Way
by Cynthia Holley and Faraday Burditt.

Cognitively

- likes to be read to
- learns by doing
- needs encouragement to talk and communicate
- is learning how to listen
- enjoys participating in stories and drama
- models language and actions of others
- is curious and creative
- benefits from concrete sensory experiences
- likes to change tasks frequently
- wants to explore and learn



Socially

- likes to work and play with others
- is learning to care for personal possessions
- is beginning group interactions
- needs to be encouraged to share
- likes to receive praise
- may wish to be alone at times
- enjoys pretending and humor
- may attempt to settle squabbles physically rather than with words
- is beginning to share
- likes to be a part of a group



Physically

- has a great need for activity
- needs a balance of rest and activity
- must develop large and small muscles
- is improving eye-hand coordination
- enjoys music and rhythms
- is beginning to use simple tools
- can remain with one task for only a limited time
- should be given time for free play

Emotionally

- needs to know limits and expectations
- should know when a job is well done
- has a great need for security
- needs structure with time for individual needs
- is sensitive to the feelings of others
- thrives in a warm and nurturing environment
- appreciates warmth and encouragement
- needs much success

Child / Staff Ratios

Because we know that children learn best when they can get plenty of individual attention, we try to keep our class sizes small. According the the guidelines set forth by the Indiana State Department of Public Welfare, the following child / staff ratios are to be maintained during all hours of operation.

Age of youngest child in each class	Maximum # of children to be supervised by one adult
3 years	10
4 years	12
5 years	15

Field Trips

One of the best ways for a young child to learn is through natural experiences and situations. It is for this reason that Noah's Ark plans one field trip each month. The center will provide transportation to and from the field trip destinations. Transportation will be in the form of center vans.

On field trip days, we ask that your child wear his or her Noah's Ark T-shirt so that our group can be easily identified. We also ask that you pack for your child a healthy sack lunch, as it is impossible for the center to provide hot lunches as we normally do. Drinks and an afternoon snack will be provided.

Field trip information will be sent to parents two weeks before the outing. Before your child takes part in our first field trip, you *must* fill out the field trip permission form included in this parent packet.

Health and Safety Policies

Accidents

All staff members at our center are fully trained each year in CPR and basic first aid. Each classroom has its own first aid kit for minor injuries such as cuts, scrapes, and bruises, and a kit is taken along each time a group leaves the center. If your child should happen to get hurt, you can feel confident in knowing that he or she will be well cared for.

In case of a medical emergency, we have included an Emergency Information Card to be filled out by the parent or guardian and returned to the center.

Communicable Diseases

We all know that it is no fun to be sick. At our center, we do everything possible to keep your child healthy by trying to control the spread of any communicable disease.

No staff member, child, or any other persons with a communicable disease will be permitted to have any contact with the children at Noah's Ark Nursery. When a child becomes ill at the center, the child's parents will be contacted immediately and asked to remove the child from the center. In the event that a parent or other guardian cannot pick the child up, he or she may stay for a short amount of time in the center's supervised sick room. Any child with a communicable disease will be kept out of the center until healthy again. Whenever exposure has occurred, all parents and staff members will be promptly notified. When a child returns to the center after an illness, we will make sure that he or she is no longer contagious before readmission.

Immunizations

According to state guidelines, all children enrolled in Noah's Ark Nursery must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella. Upon enrollment, parents are required to show a record of the month and year each vaccination was administered.

Medication

According to the guidelines set forth by the Indiana State Department of Public Welfare, the giving of medication shall be done only on written order from the physician to our center with the knowledge of the parent. Any medication sent to center must be kept in its original container bearing the original pharmacy label. When the child no longer needs the medication, it will be destroyed or returned to the parent.

Accident Report

This report is to be filled out by any staff member who gives treatment, no matter how minor, to any child in the center.

Child's name _____

Staff member _____

Time _____ Date _____

Explain the injury (how, when, where...) _____

What action was taken? _____

staff member

date

General Information

Child's name _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Nickname _____

Mother's name _____

Place of work _____ phone _____

Father's name _____

Place of work _____ phone _____

Are the parents divorced or separated? _____

Noah's Ark Nursery has permission to release my child only to the people that I have listed here.

Name

Relation

Please list the names and ages of the child's siblings:

Does your child have any special fears that we should be aware of?

Does your child have any special needs or conditions? (For instance, allergies, medication, hearing or vision loss...)

Emergency Information

Child's name _____

Mother's phone at work _____ home _____

Father's phone at work _____ home _____

In case you cannot be reached in the event of an emergency, please list the names and phone numbers of people we can contact.

Name	phone
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Child's doctor _____

Child's dentist _____

Preferred hospital _____

In case of an emergency, I give permission to Noah's Ark Nursery to have my child examined by a physician. In the event that I cannot be reached, I also give permission for any necessary treatment that will benefit my child.

signed, _____

Immunization Record

please list the month and year each vaccination was administered

Polio _____

Diphtheria _____

Tetanus _____

Whooping Cough _____

Measles, mumps, rubella _____

Field Trip Permission

Frequently, Noah's Ark Nursery will be embarking on learning adventures that lead us out of the center and into the world. By signing this form you give your child permission to join us on field trips, and at the same time release us from all liabilities.

My child _____

has permission to join Noah's Ark Nursery for any and all field trips.

signed, _____